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## CHRISTMAS CEREMONIES AT ROME.

A SUDDEN influx of visitors at the hotels, a jostling of carriages in the streets, and a certain indescribable air of bustle and activity which prevailed during the Christmas-week last year, announced that many foreigners were congregated at Rome to witness the ceremonies pertaining to the festival of the Nativity at the high seat of Roman Catholicism. Most people, I believe, wished eagerly to be for once free from that human infirmity which, as night draws on, calls more or less imperatively for sleep—sleep, as the great restorer of jaded mind and body. How else would it be possible to hear the Christmas-eve vespers with the choir of well-attuned voices at one church, and the nuns' singing at another; the midnight mass at St Peter's, and the Shepherd's Hymn at two o'clock in the morning, and still rise before dawn so as to secure seats in St Peter's during the celebration of the grand Christmas Mass? Our party not being endowed with frames of twenty-women-power, but all needing some modicum of rest and sleep in the course of the four-and-twenty hours, endeavoured to moderate their desires, and contented themselves on Christmas Eve with passing two hours at the Sistine Chapel.

The Sistine Chapel was built in 1473 by the command of Sixtus IV., and subsequently adorned by many great painters; but it is perhaps most famous as enshrining some of the master-pieces of Michael Angelo, especially his world-renowned Last Judgment. We had visited the chapel by daylight on a previous occasion, and had been impressed by a certain grand simplicity in its design. It may be called, I suppose, with propriety the pope's private chapel, being in reality a lofty oblong chamber attached to the Vatican. It measures about 135 feet in length by 45 in width, and has a gallery running round three sides. A sort of barrier divides it into two unequal parts, the smaller portion—that near the door—being reserved for ladies, who, during religious services, are not permitted to pass beyond. It is the fashion to rave about the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel with an indiscriminating admiration; and I believe them to be master-pieces of design and colouring—the subjects among the grandest that pertain to humanity, and bodied forth by genius that was adequate to its task; but the simple truth is, that these frescoes are so blackened with the smoke of ever-burning lamps, and the vapours of often-rising incense, that hardly the designs, and certainly not their colouring, can be fairly estimated even by the patient examiner, much less by the hurried visitor

who 'does' Rome in a month, and judges of such things as these by the piecemeal revelations of an opera-glass, and by the dim light which ordinarily alone penetrates the chapel.

The wall on the left side as one enters is devoted to fresco-paintings by some of the early masters, of subjects taken from the life of Moses; that on the right side, to subjects from the life of Christ, illustrated by Perugino, Ghirlandajo, and others. It was not till the year 1508 that Michael Angelo, at the entreaty of Pope Julius II., undertook the painting of the roof. At this time, the great artist's triple gifts of genius as architect, sculptor, and painter, were not recognised; but his success as a sculptor had made many rivals envious; and it is said that this commission, though coming from the pope, emanated, in the first instance, from a cabal who had a double aim—that of causing him, by the distraction of his energies, to neglect a grand mausoleum he had recently undertaken to execute, and to venture on an enterprise in which they believed he would fail.

It was already known that Michael Angelo considered oil-painting as worthy only of the powers of 'women and idlers,' and that the grander style of fresco-painting was the one he avowed to be the more congenial to his own genius. Yet so ignorant was he of the necessary process of this branch of art, that he sent to Florence for certain mediocre but practical painters in fresco, and set them to work from his own designs, and under his personal direction. As might have been expected, such assistants proved only artisans, and, however skilful and painstaking, failed in carrying out and embodying the thoughts of the master. After a disappointing trial of a few weeks, he sent these men back to Florence, and shutting himself up alone in the chapel, set vigorously to work, excluding every one, and often painting with scarcely any intermission from dawn till sunset.

This laborious and self-sustained life continued for many months; no one knew what progress was made; and even the pope himself desired that the public, not a clique of artists, should decide on the merit of the paintings. Accordingly, in the beginning of 1511, the chapel was opened, the scaffolding removed, and the work was found sufficiently advanced for a true judgment on its merits to be formed. The people were enchanted; and the little envious band who had plotted the ruin of their rival, found they had elicited from his hand a *chef-d'œuvre*, and been the means of crowning him with fresh laurels. The designs of the roof form a continuation of the Scripture history commenced on the

walls; and by far the larger portion of the subjects are drawn from the Old Testament. Indeed, the 'divine' Raphael, as it has been said, was essentially the painter of the Gospel, and Michael Angelo the grand illustrator of the Old Testament. There was something in the terrible histories associated with the Fall of Man, the Deluge, and the Jewish dispensation, into which he threw his sympathies more readily than he could lend them to the seraphic purity of the Virgin Mother, or the patience, humility, and love, which warmed the hearts of the early converts to Christianity.

Nearly thirty years afterwards, when Clement VII. occupied the papal chair, the same great artist was commissioned to execute the fresco of the Last Judgment. This marvellous work is sixty feet high, and thirty broad, and occupies the end-wall of the Sistine Chapel; but it has suffered from damp as well as from smoke, and is, moreover, partially hidden by the high-altar; consequently, I really believe that ordinary people may derive more pleasure from examining a good copy or good engraving of it, than from seeing the fresco itself. The great painter is said to have acknowledged that he sought his inspiration in the pages of Dante, rather than in the Bible itself, and the treatment he chose to adopt tempted him to introduce the portraits of friends and foes in paradise or in the infernal regions, according to the measure of his love or hate. The curious may still observe in the lower right angle of the picture a figure with ass's ears, and a body twined round by a serpent. This form, represented as writhing in the lowest depth of hell, is the likeness of the pope's master of the ceremonies, Biagio by name, who had raised certain objections to this great work while it was in progress. Biagio, on finding himself thus caricatured, complained to the pope, who requested that the figure might be altered; but Michael Angelo declared that it was impossible, adding, that though his holiness might be able to effect a release from purgatory, he had no power over hell.

This grand fresco, commenced by Michael Angelo in his sixtieth year, occupied him for eight years, and was completed in 1541, during the pontificate of Paul III. In the Colonna Palace, in Rome, there is shewn an ivory carving of the Last Judgment; it is about two feet high, the figures appearing in alto and bass-relief, and is said to have cost two brothers the labour of thirty years to execute.

It was eight o'clock on Christmas-eve when we arrived at the Vatican. Passing up the Scala Regia—that grand staircase by Bernini, so famous for its imposing perspective—we entered the Sala Regia, a large and richly decorated apartment, intended as an audience-hall for ambassadors, but which also forms a vestibule to the Sistine Chapel. When the massive folding-door of the chapel was opened from within, in answer to our tap, we perceived at a glance that the seats reserved for ladies were nearly all occupied, and yet the service was not to commence for nearly an hour. However, by dint of a little patient perseverance, we edged our way on, and at last procured tolerably advantageous places. As perhaps many of my readers are aware, a rigid rule prevails that ladies of all nations and of all ages who appear in the presence of the pope, must be attired in black, and wear black veils. It may be

imagined how funereal was the aspect of about two hundred ladies crowded together thus costumed. A few paces distant from us, a sort of platform or gallery was reserved for the dowager of Spain, Queen Christina, and her suite, who in due time arrived to perform their devotions. Meanwhile, I had time to look about me.

The chapel was lighted with innumerable candles. Massive candelabra, each with many burners, were ranged round the galleries, and lighted up the frescoes of the walls and ceiling in a manner that gave them something of a weird effect. Our end of the chapel was dim, if not dark; but we looked forward to the comparatively vacant space before us, which seemed to rest in a blaze of light, and shewed to advantage the uniforms of the pope's noble guard, and the rich vestments of the priests, as from time to time they made their way to the places apparently reserved for them. By and by, the pope and several dignitaries of the church, entered, the Holy Father being conducted to a throne-like seat beneath a canopy. Then the organ poured forth a swelling strain, and many silvery voices rose and fell in measured cadences. The service in the Latin tongue commenced, ever and anon interrupted by genuflections and pantomimic ceremonies, of which a Protestant can hardly be expected to give a faithful account. We lent ourselves to the free enjoyment of the music; but apparently the monotony of the scene soon became wearisome to a large proportion of the ladies present. By half-past nine o'clock, some of the best seats were vacated, and we were able to push forward almost close to the barrier which separated us from the great body of the chapel. Occasionally, we heard a few words spoken in a foreign tongue; but so frequently did a buzz of English conversation break on the ear, that we concluded at least three-fourths of the ladies present must be English or Americans, who, like ourselves, were attracted by curiosity to see the sight—not drawn to the Sistine Chapel to join in a religious service. I believe this celebration of high-mass lasted till nearly midnight; but probably few strangers remained till the conclusion, for, in retiring about ten o'clock, we ourselves only seemed following a general example.

I know the fine things that have been said and ought to be said in favour of early rising; nevertheless, I persist in considering candle-light rising and candle-light breakfast among the disagreeable incidents of travelling and sight-seeing. I had desired to be called at half-past five in the morning; and when the sharp tap at my door aroused me, I opened my eyes on pitchy darkness; but that very intensity of night revealed what would never have shewn itself in the dawn, a single topaz-like spark that shone from out the wood-ashes. I had not had the heart to desire a fire to be lighted for me at that early hour, but here was the thing beautifully arranged—three puffs from the bellows, and the skilful adjustment of some slender logs, were all that was necessary for my purpose; and in five minutes, a bright flame and a crackling music dispelled the sense of gloom I had experienced. By the by, a pair of bellows, usually asthmatic, and a pair of tongs, always rusty, constitute the 'fire-irons' to be found in such Italian apartments as boast the luxury of an

open chimney. Nor are these all-sufficient weapons to be despised: the management of a wood-fire is not a thing to be rashly or unadvisedly undertaken; and though, when masterly instruction is bestowed on a genius apt to receive and constant to retain, the accomplishment may be acquired in a few practical lessons, I have known unfortunates who, after suffering the severities of many transalpine winters, were still imbeciles at their own hearth-stone.

Even in December the daylight comes and goes in Rome with a visible celerity that reminds a northern traveller of the latitude into which he has passed. There is, in fact, little or no twilight; but Christmas morning rose foggy and dull, and when we left the hotel between seven and eight o'clock, the aspect of the streets was more murky than I have often known London to be at the same season. Then the streets are so narrow, and the shops so mean, that there is nothing to relieve the gloom. As we crossed the Ponte di St Angelo, we observed that the fog crawled and clung about the Tiber even as a London fog crawls and clings about the Thames.

It may easily be believed, that a faithful description and a historical account of St Peter's would fill a thick volume. Nothing of the sort is here attempted: I shall do little more than endeavour to convey to the untravelled reader some of my own passing impressions. This magnificent structure—certainly the largest, and by some critics declared to be the most beautiful church in the world—marks the spot where the martyr-apostle St Peter was interred after his crucifixion, head downwards, on a hill about two miles distant. In the year 90 A.D., a bishop of Rome, who was said to have received ordination from St Peter himself, erected an oratory on the site of the present cathedral; and in 306 Constantine the Great built a basilica here, which henceforth continued a centre of attraction to the Christian world. It lasted till the end of the fifteenth century; and some curious representations of it exist among the paintings of the early Italian masters. Ruin had, however, long threatened the building, and various plans for a new structure had been submitted to different popes, when, in 1503, the assistance of Bramante was secured. In 1506, Julius II. laid the foundation-stone of the new building under the pier against which the statue of St Veronica now stands. This pope indeed entertained the ambitious desire of rendering the new St Peter's a shrine for his own mausoleum, on which Michael Angelo was then engaged, and to which allusion has already been made as a work which gave rise to malicious envy: a work destined never to be completed, but which, in its fragmentary state, rests in another church in Rome—the well-known Moses, a copy of which is placed in the Crystal Palace, being the central and most remarkable statue.

Only four piers, and the arches which spring from them, were completed when Bramante the architect died, and by this time Leo X. filled the papal chair. New architects were chosen, and the assistance of Raphael obtained. The original plan had been that of a Greek cross. Raphael preferred the Latin cross; but Raphael died in 1520, and among the changes of purpose and of patrons which ensued, time passed on; and it was not till the year 1546, when Michael Angelo had completed his seventy-second year, that to this great artist was confided the task of altering, modifying, and completing the work so many hands had attempted to carry out. Michael Angelo returned to the form of the Greek cross, enlarged the tribune and the two transepts, strengthened the foundations, and commenced the dome on a plan suggested by the

dome of the cathedral at Florence\*—saying that he would lift the Pantheon into the air. He kept his word; for the external measurement of the dome—diameter 195½ feet—exceeds that of the great heathen temple by nearly two feet. It is true that, though he reached his ninetieth year, Michael Angelo did not live to see the completion of his work; but so far as this portion of the building is concerned, succeeding architects adhered exactly to his plan. We must remember that the building of St Peter's occupied more than a century—at a period when death seemed unusually busy in high places, so that the generations of men in power succeeded each other with strange rapidity. Hence proceeded the frequent changes of purpose which occurred in the erection of this cathedral. Many critics regret that Michael Angelo's design of a Corinthian portico, combined with the Greek cross, was not followed, as this arrangement would have permitted the whole dome to be visible from the piazza. But, on the contrary, succeeding architects returned to the form of the Latin cross, and built a façade which, however beautiful in itself, has the unfortunate effect of so screening the dome, that there is no point of the piazza from which the cupola can be combined with the rest of the building, so as to exhibit all parts in their just proportions.

In fact, it is necessary to ascend above the cupola in order to realise the gigantic proportions of the building. Yet it may give some idea of the height to mention that, on the roof, wooden houses are erected for the convenience of workmen, who seem always occupied on the mosaics or in executing other repairs, such houses being quite shrouded by the angle of the parapets, and consequently invisible from below; and that the thirteen statues of Our Saviour and the Twelve Apostles which crown the façade do not strike the eye as colossal, although they are really 17 feet high.

An inside gallery runs round the base of the cupola, and from this gallery the visitor looks down on the bronze baldacchino resting far below; and up to the colossal mosaics which line the dome, and which are of necessity executed in large squares, though, when seen from below, they look highly finished and delicate. I was sorry to perceive a crack in the mosaics many inches in width and many feet in length, which indicated too surely a dangerous strain, though this large crack was quite invisible from below. On mentioning the circumstance, I discovered a certain superstitious feeling to prevail in Rome in connection with the dome of St Peter's—a feeling that its permanence and the permanence of the papal power were in some way connected.

It is the interior of St Peter's that in most hearts kindles the sentiment of admiration to intensity. Byron says:

Enter; its grandeur overwhelms thee not;  
And why? it is not lessened; but thy mind,  
Expanded by the genius of the spot,  
Has grown colossal.

Indeed, some wondrous law of harmony must prevail in St Peter's, which takes from it that stern, if not rude aspect which commonly belongs to immensity in works of art—a law similar to that which rules in nature, for the beautifully rounded and developed tree will always appear smaller than it really is when brought into comparison with those of less graceful

\* It is curious to observe how reverential true genius is. Michael Angelo used to gaze for hours in admiration of Brunelleschi's dome at Florence, and often exclaimed when studying it: 'Like it, I will not do; better, I cannot'; and in accordance with his desire, Michael Angelo's tomb in Santa Croce, at Florence, is so placed that it can see the wondrous dome he so admired.

growth, and a man or woman of perfectly symmetrical figure never looks the same height as a gaunt sort of person of the same inches. In my own case, I never could realise the vastness of St Peter's except by a sort of child's play. I would measure off by my eye a certain space, and say: 'Surely that might be the site of a large church;' and then making the extreme limit of that measurement the starting-point of another, would mentally portion out a second allotment, and so on, till I satisfied myself that many fine churches might stand within the walls of that one. Or I would walk up to the marble cherubim that support the vases for holy-water, and satisfy myself that these figures, which look so infantile, were in reality five feet in height.

I always found St Peter's a particularly comfortable place in cold weather, but never appreciated its warm and pleasant atmosphere more thoroughly than on that chilly foggy Christmas morning. We had been correctly informed that it was only necessary to present ourselves attired in black, with black veils on our heads instead of bonnets, to claim seats at the side of the high-altar, where benches rising one above the other had been placed, capable, I should think, of accommodating from four to five hundred ladies. We were in such good time that we saw at a glance we might choose our places, so we walked leisurely up the nave, enjoying the warmth of the many lamps, and the fragrant remains of the incense. One of the most famous objects in St Peter's is the notorious bronze statue of the saint, which some antiquaries declare to be an ancient Jupiter with the keys added, and the name changed; others say it was the statue of a slave; but the majority of critics, I believe, consider it to be the work of the early Christians, who perhaps melted down a Jupiter, and used the metal for their purpose. I confess I cannot believe the old pagans, who have left us so many forms of beauty, ever made anything half so hideous as this seated image, which resembles a Hindoo idol more than anything else. On Christmas-day, a ring—apparently an enormous sapphire surrounded with large diamonds—blazed upon one of the brazen fingers; and two soldiers were stationed, one on each side, a guard of honour for St Peter—and the ring.

Most people are familiar with the interior of St Peter's, if only by means of drawings and engravings, and I need scarcely remind my readers that the high-altar, with its beautiful bronze baldacchino, or grand canopy, stands immediately beneath the dome. The relics of St Peter are said to rest beneath the altar; and the confessional, where Canova's kneeling statue of Pius VI. is placed, is surrounded by a balustrade of marble, on which are suspended eighty-nine lamps, kept burning night and day. Leaning over this balustrade, we look down on the statue which represents the pope praying at the tomb of the apostle, and likewise on the double flight of steps which lead to the shrine. The baldacchino, which is 94 feet high, and which is profusely ornamented and gilt, was partly composed of bronze stripped from the Pantheon, in those days when there seemed little reverence for the beautiful remains of ancient art, and when the Coliseum itself was used like a quarry to supply building materials for mediæval palaces. It is conjectured that tin from our Cornish mines was a component part of that Pantheon bronze; brought from the island of the barbarians by the Romans, when Rome was the seat and centre of civilisation. How strangely do the generations clasp hands, and weave the chain which stretches through all time!

The great dome is mainly supported by four piers, each pier having a colossal statue at its base; and the seats appointed for ladies stretched on our side from the statue of St Helena—represented bearing

the cross, of which her dream led to the discovery, and other instruments of the Saviour's passion—and the statue of St Longinus—the soldier who pierced His side; opposite, the seats extended between the statue of St Andrew and that of St Veronica. We were by no means too early, for ten minutes after we had secured seats in the first and second rows, ladies thronged in so fast that I began to pity a certain official, a sort of master of the ceremonies, whose duty it appeared to be to superintend the accommodation of the black-robed visitors. This functionary was a gentleman evidently, and one who spoke three or four languages fluently; but he wore a dress that belonged to the Elizabethan period; and by the starched ruff, which gave his head a decapitated appearance, the slashed sleeves, and ruffles, and numerous chains hanging about him, so reminded one of some ancient knight, that I found myself indulging in a sort of waking dream, and fancying that I saw before me an old picture that had stepped out of its frame, and become vivified for this occasion. But the living picture was a character with decided opinions of his own. His abhorrence of crinoline became painfully evident as he marshalled the ladies to their places, and used hard words about the 'balloons' that so troubled him. He did not look like a married or paternal personage, and, moreover, I believe celibates are chiefly in favour near the 'Saint Siège;' but he spoke as severely of the *mode*, as a Benedict might have done who had to provide dresses to cover the crinolines of a wife and half-a-dozen daughters. Then his temper certainly was tried by the pertinacity with which people would seat themselves just in the way where the new-comers had to pass, on the seat that he insisted must be filled up last. The uninitiated fancied this third row a particularly good place, which it was not, as its occupants discovered later in the day; but our friend of the starched ruff had to renew his explanations and dislodge new-comers every five minutes. On one occasion, when he had spoken to some ladies in three languages, without making the slightest impression, he lost his patience, but startled them into comprehension by abruptly exclaiming, in good English: 'Of what country are you, that you don't understand me?' However, all troubles come to an end some time or other, and his tiresome duty seemed ended by about nine o'clock. I should mention that the very best seats, the extra-reserved, were railed off, and apportioned to the 'ladies of the French garrison,' who, later in the morning, came in by twos and threes on the arms of French officers. A trifling courtesy this, no doubt, and yet significant of the condition of modern Rome, where a foreign soldiery keep guard over her most time-honoured memorials, exercise in the piazza of her cathedral, and take the wall when passing her citizens in the streets, whose very names ring with a rhythm of past glories; the soldiery who seek to drown the audible murmur of discontent with the drum and the fife, and maintain by sheer force an outward calm that can be only the precursor of national convulsion. Ladies of the French garrison, enjoy your reserved seats while you may; I fear the scorn that gleams from the bright eyes of many a Roman maid and matron as your sons and husbands pass by, glances also sideways at you!

Soon after nine o'clock, St Peter's began—I was going to say to fill—but that is a mistake. I cannot imagine St Peter's to be ever filled. It seemed to absorb the crowds who entered; they looked so small, and were so quickly scattered. Now a party of Sisters of Charity arrived, and, before taking their places, bent their knees in profound reverence to some object of their worship; then came the pope's Swiss Guard in their clown-like uniform of black, red, and yellow—said to have been designed by Michael Angelo; then



bare-legged friars with their sandalled feet, serge frocks, and rope-girdles, spitting as well as praying, and giving unmistakable evidence of their standing quarrel with, and separation from, soap and water. Later came more soldiers, and officers in brilliant uniforms, and ambassadors in official costumes, and priests, whose costly vestments and jewels eclipsed every other decoration. I thought, too, that the black dresses of the ladies, serried into masses, formed a contrast or background which set off those brilliant costumes to advantage. It is true there were many ladies in ordinary walking-dresses—especially those who came in for half an hour before proceeding to the English Protestant church—but they were not admitted beyond a certain barrier.

At ten o'clock precisely, the massive centre door was thrown open; and at the same moment, a strain of music was heard. Then began the grand procession of the day, every incident of which has, I believe, some symbolic meaning. It is, I think, a pity that these types are not more generally explained and understood; were their hidden meaning made apparent, these ceremonies would be more instructive and suggestive to the Roman Catholic laity, and more interesting to us heretics. Priests of many denominations walked two and two, generally with hands placed together, and pointed upwards, as if in prayer; then came cardinals in their rich robes, and in the same attitude, which permitted us to see their jewelled rings worn on the third finger. More immediately preceding His Holiness, three jewelled crowns, or mitres, were borne, each on a separate cushion; and two large fans of white feathers, in which the eyes of peacocks' feathers are set, were waved to and fro. I understand these eyes are symbolic of the vigilance expected from the pontiff; and, likewise, that the eyes of all men are turned towards him.

The pope was carried in his chair, or portable throne, and raised high on the shoulders of his bearers; and, with thumb and two extended fingers—said to symbolise the Trinity—he gave his blessing to the people as he passed along. Not believing in the infallibility of any human being, my feelings of respect were not so absorbing as to exclude other emotions; and I must confess a sentiment of compassion for this frail old man was that most prominent with me. I know not how one can go over one of his palaces and mark the arrangements which indicate his isolated existence without pity taking possession of the heart. Why, if it were only that an old man must fade away, and fall into the grave without the intimate companionship and tender care of woman, he must be an object of compassion. Is there no Christian symbol to be traced in the fact that, in our Saviour's history, women were found 'last at the cross,' and 'earliest at the grave,' that may sanctify this Protestant compassion?

Pius IX. has a benevolent expression of countenance, mingled with weakness and indecision. I have seldom seen any countenance so colourless; his closely shaven face on Christmas-day had that peculiar pallor which, in the decline of life, is said to indicate great vitality, and consequently the prospect of a long life. The pope's vestments were of white silk, richly embroidered with gold; and he wore on his head the famous triple crown, which blazed with jewels. It may be worth while to remark that the lower circlet of this crown typifies temporal dominion, while the mitre represents the spiritual; the second circlet shadows forth the union of the spiritual and temporal authority; and the third, the union of the pontifical, imperial, and royal power. In the large space behind the high-altar, the pope descended from his chair, and received the homage of the cardinals—and then commenced the ceremony of High Mass. The music, somewhat dramatic in its character, was exquisite;

a choir of well-attuned voices proceeded from a sort of balcony, with close trellis-like gilded railings, which concealed the persons of the singers—and I for one could not help thinking of birds singing from a gilded cage. I need not express my Protestant feelings about the ceremonies of the mass; but I must confess the scene was impressive when the pope, standing at the high-altar with his assistant-priesthood around him, advanced a step or two forward, and elevated the host for the faithful to worship. By some well-concerted signal, the next instant the cannon of St Angelo thundered out to all Rome the intelligence, so that doubtless multitudes of believers who were not within the cathedral bowed themselves in adoration at the same moment. But that very ceremony, imposing and impressive as it was, had also its disenchanting power; for as every believer in the doctrine of transubstantiation knelt at the elevation of the host, they thus picked themselves out from among that vast throng, and proclaimed how small their number in comparison with the foreign visitors who had been attracted hither from curiosity to see the show. Of course, with only this transient opportunity of observation for one's guide, it is difficult to speak with precision on such a subject; but I certainly think that not more than one out of every fifteen or twenty persons who were in St Peter's on Christmas-morning, exclusive of priests and nuns, acknowledged themselves Romanists at the moment to which I refer.

When the ceremony was over, the pope was again carried in his chair; but this time he passed down the opposite side of the nave, and thus was seen closely by the people congregated in that part of the church, towards whom he extended his hand with the gesture of benediction as he passed along. The crowd now began to move, following the pope like the billows of a receding tide—all but those who paused to worship at the shrine of St Peter, or to kiss the extended toe of the bronze statue.

It was nearly one o'clock when we reached the open air, and looked upon a scene not easily to be forgotten. Slanting rays of sunlight had gleamed through the windows of the cathedral, and had proclaimed with their pencils of light that the morning mist had cleared away; but we were not prepared for a literally cloudless sky of dark, clear blue—a sky that in the rarefied depth and intensity of its ether has no parallel in our northern latitude; a true 'Italian sky,' the memory of which dwells in the mind 'a joy for ever.' The sun blazed from the clear blue vault as from a throne—and pitilessly on the unbanned heads exposed to its power, as we stood on the cathedral steps waiting for our carriage to draw up. But as this was a tedious process, necessity waived ceremony; and ladies were seen hurrying to whatever shade they could find, or raising shawls from their shoulders to their brows, by way of protection. And yet in the shade so many sought, the north wind was found keenly cutting, so that the alternative for that odd quarter of an hour lay between the chance of a *coup de soleil*, or a severe cold. The scene meanwhile continued to be sufficiently interesting; the bright sunshine gleamed on the cardinals' red carriages, as one after another they rolled away with their priestly burdens, and on the ambassador's gay dresses, and on the Swiss guard and French soldiers stationed in the piazza; and it made rainbows in the bright fountains there which seemed to leap up with a spirit of innocent gladness. The clear blue ether also formed a matchless background for the white statues that crowned the colonnades of the piazza—peopling their entablature to the number of nearly two hundred. These statues represent duly canonised saints, and though really twelve feet in height, appear

only lifelike; but then we must remember that the colonnades are above sixty feet in height.

In due time, our turn arrived, and thankful we were for the shade of a close carriage as we stepped into it. But driving home was no very easy matter; we had to fall into the long line of carriages that was forming, and to proceed at a walking-pace until long after we had crossed the Tiber. High Mass at St Peter's was the great event of Christmas-day in Rome; and the procession that crowded the main lines of thoroughfare for an hour after it was over, demonstrated how numerous and motley had been the congregation beneath that wondrous dome!

### IN RE, MIND AND MATTER.

BOBBIE was the name of an old bachelor Scotchman and odd character who kept an old-book shop in a certain university town of North Britain. He was a little man, with keen gray eyes under a high wrinkled forehead, over which straggled one or two friendless hairs, of which there never were so many on his head since I knew it, but that they might have been counted. His features were sharp, with a constant look of care; his whiskers white and thin; his voice shrill; and his lips thin, as if worn with use. Everything was sharp and thin about him, from his knees to his nose. His black coat was tight and bare, and his black trousers yellow and snuffy. He kept himself as he kept his favourite authors—whom he wouldn't disgrace by binding afresh—no, not to make them fetch double the money.

He never had any other name than Bobbie; or if he had, nobody knew it. Something about him forbade inquiry: there was no sign over his door; and he never gave receipts or credit. My instincts told me he was a Smith—Mr Robert Smith. He had the tread of a Smith—laid his feet on the world's soil like one with a right to do it—steadily, frankly, flatly, deliberately. He had the humanity of a Smith—that feeling for the species which, however it may be with other persons, is always perfect in the breast of a Smith. So it ought to be. Aren't the Smiths, in a sort, human society? Others may have the feeling, but it is only among the Smiths that humanity can rank with the family affections. And lastly, he had that reserve about his name which characterises the Smiths: he never told it to anybody; nobody knew it. Not that the Smiths generally deny themselves; but none of them ever had so fine a sense of what was due to the family. 'Homo sum,' &c. 'Smith sum,' &c. There is no occasion to mention the particular *genus*; he lived and died as Bobbie the Bookseller.

No one knew what he was in the beginning, or when the raw material of him was cast into the mould of the old-book shop. But the casting was perfect—he fitted it exactly. A cubic foot added to its space—an inch to the counter—would have made harmony impossible between him and it. As it was, he harmonised, soul and body of him, with everything in it. With the stock-in-trade, indeed, his mind had a sort of Corsican brotherhood. Like it, he smacked of every system and of all knowledge; his kaleidoscopic views changed with its changes, whether made by sale or purchase. When nothing was doing, and there was no new book to be assimilated, he would sit for hours as steadily as the books on their shelves, and looking as straight before him, brooding over some owlish question in metaphysics—Did the owl come from the egg, or the egg from the owl? He had always food for reflection.

Of his many peculiarities, only one is to the purpose. In the flux of his mind, two things were as firmly fixed as posts in a river—his belief in the

supremacy of reason, and his sense of duty. 'Vivere convenienter nature' was his sum of all the commandments; and wherever reason pointed the way, Bobbie put his best foot forward—a dreadfully practical little man. But as his own reason—which was none of the best—and not reason in general, was his guide, he was continually falling into extravagances. It was his foible to be always illustrating the power of mind over matter—if mind couldn't triumph over matter, where was reason's supremacy or the stoical doctrine?

The said doctrine had hardly fair-play from Bobbie—he understood it so literally. Nature was something less than a blanket, and included neither cornfields nor stall-oxen, opinion nor laws. We were all right in a state of nature—so said Rousseau—mischievous entered the world with inventions and conventions, especially the latter. Wherever he got the notion—most likely from some forgotten work of the eighteenth century, long since gone out of stock, Bobbie had it, that all the most deplorable evils were due to conventions (meaning conventionalities); and from this sprang, in the obscurities of his brain, a string of heresies as long and sickly as the shoots of a potato in a dungeon. It would shock you to enumerate them. There was reason to fear marriage was a convention. Polygamy here, monogamy there; here many wives, there many husbands: bah, it was a convention! Property was a convention—any proof wanted for that?—the evil were less if the law were clearer; it was a perfect muddle of a convention! The very order of society was a convention—pampered aristocracies, high caste, low caste, humane institution of American slavery! Of course it was a convention! Religion—yes, we weep to record it—religion was a convention. Nature in it?—why, on the face of it, it was supernatural!—and Bobbie would array all the religions of the world, from Mumbo-Jumboism to Mormonism, and bewail the folly of mankind. It wasn't much one honest man could do; but he would do it. He wanted nature, and not conventions, and, while there was life in him, he would stand up against conventions!

One day he stumbled on a syllogism, which nearly proved the death of him, by knocking him up against a hitherto unsuspected convention. 'Loss of time is an evil; the major, good. 'Sleep is a loss of time;' the minor, bad, but not so to Bobbie. 'Therefore sleep is an evil'—conclusion quite alarming! Being an evil, sleep was a convention! Bobbie, who loved his night's rest, and never opened till ten a.m., was distressed at the prospect of this new martyrdom to principle; for him to discover a convention was to stand up against it; he was far too practical and moral a man not to suffer from his false conclusions. So he banged at the joints of that syllogism with all his logic to see whether they were sound; and still the inexorable major and minor turned round on them to the conclusion. He consulted a student of metaphysics on the subject, who attacked the minor with the vigour of eighteen; denied it, used bad language to it, called it a *petitio principii*; and said, in short, that sleep, so far from being a loss of time, was one of the most healthful and necessary ways of employing it. Bobbie's pride of intellect was touched. He defended the minor. Sleep was time lost to activity—an evil—a convention; and he would shew that and the power of mind over matter by doing without it.

The night following his conversation with the gownsmen, Bobbie opened the campaign against the newly detected tyranny. He took no one into his secret, and meant to surprise the world by a discovery that would add a third to human life, if it would not pave the way to a triumph over death itself. Filled with these great ideas, he saw to his coal-scuttle,

draw down the blinds on the windows of his room over the shop, and adjusted himself for the night. He spent it on the whole pleasantly, reading a rusty *Locke on the Understanding* before midnight; writing out the fatal syllogism, and a note of his faith and feelings, till three in the morning; drank a glass of cold water, and exercised himself in leaping over the chairs placed at intervals in a circle round the table till half-past three; sat a while at the fire; feeling drowsy about four, went down to the shop for Tom Paine, where he was thoroughly roused by a conversation, in a screaming voice, through the shutter, with a policeman, who was surprised by seeing the light through the chinks; read Tom Paine till seven; cooked his breakfast and ate it till eight, and surprised the neighbours by opening shop for the day at a quarter past eight. During the day he felt very drowsy, but was able to go through the ordinary routine of buying and selling, and conversing with the gowmsmen who dropped in, as if there were nothing particular on foot.

Next night, he commenced by continuing the note of his feelings and experiences. The record is before me, but too long and rambling for quotation. It begins (I alter the dialect, which was a bewildering mixture of Scotch and English): 'So far forth I have holden on, and not without hope of triumph. Why should I, the divine *Ego* [Bobbie deified his reason], for a moment be lost in the unfathomed— [A gap here.] Arms of Morpheus, forsooth! the pagan hypothesis. O man! how can you have led us, with your vagaries, into this time-destroying convention—this curious putting of ourselves by in sleep—this voluntary exile of consciousness and power which we nightly suffer—this— [Gap again.] But I am throwing off the thrall.' And then came the particulars. He had to rub his eyes many times before finishing his scribbling; and when the clock struck twelve, and he rose for a change of employment, they were red and hot, and his head was aching. But he firmly believed that the majesty of the will being once asserted, nature would interfere to readjust matters, and he should be free, nor longer liable to be caught and clasped to the bosom of the insinuating pagan hypothesis! When, thereafter, he tried to read, the print danced on the page, and colours red, blue, and black, came and went upon it; and when he shook his head to rid himself of these impediments, he shook out long webs and strings of gauze that spread and hung before his eyes, with broken edges, rents here and there; here blotches of black, and there of blood, always shifting, always going downward out of sight, and reappearing immediately from above on their way down again; while numerous flies went in and out, and up and down, in the gauze, and completed his distraction. Reading became quite impossible. He now bethought him of the shop again. He went down, lit the gas, kindled the fire, and gave the place every appearance of business, save that the door was shut and the shutters on the windows. He set himself in his customary seat, as if he were expecting customers, just as he had done any time for twenty years; and doing nothing, held himself awake, if not by sheer force of habit—it was never heard of that he napped in the shop—at least by a strong effort of will. At three, another change became necessary: his feet were sleeping, if he wasn't—O weakness of matter!—and he had some difficulty in trailing himself up stairs. Once there, he put on the kettle, made and drank a cup of strong tea, ate some bread and butter; and it now being after four, he spent the remainder of the morning till breakfast-time in playing loo with himself for high stakes, working Dumby's cards with great anxiety for that imaginary individual's interests. The shop was opened at eight. The issues in the great cause, 'Mind and Matter,' Bobbie for the

plaintiff, were now rapidly evolving themselves. As the day advanced, he felt like one in an uncomfortable dream. His fancy became active, and twisted everything at its will into the maddest grotesqueries; his thoughts played leap-frog in the chambers of his brain, and congested on his tongue, striving for expression. It was mooted about that day that Bobbie had lost his wits. He stood up as usual to the business of conversation, and the students who dropped in could make nothing of him. The little man's gray eyes were red; the wrinkles on his brow were deepened; and there was a stoop on his back, that used to be straight as a rush. Alas! for the supremacy of Reason! His absurdities and inconsistencies, that spread over many weeks, were amusing, exhibited in so many minutes, were terrific—sheer insanity. In the same breath, he was a baboon with Monboddoo, and recollected with Plato the state of pre-existence! In the same breath he agreed with Hume and Berkeley. Conscience was at once the divine monitor and a convention; and he went in for the Ptolemaic system against an intending purchaser of the *Principia*. He shut the shop that night an hour before his usual time, and thus confirmed the suspicions which his behaviour had already awakened in the minds of his neighbours.

The third night opened with a game at 'loo.' No notes, no feelings, no particulars of his experiences. If his crotchets had not been so firmly rooted in him, he would have given up the cards by this time in re, 'Mind and Matter,' as well as literally. But Bobbie was no common litigant. He had foreseen and provided against the weakness of matter leading mind, through sheer pity, into a compromise of its claims. He had printed the fatal syllogism in fatal red ink, in a large hand, and pasted it on the four sides of his room. It stared him into a sense of duty on whichever side he turned:

NO COMPROMISE!

Loss of time is an evil.

Sleep is a loss of time.

Sleep is an evil.

So on he went with his loo; Dumby now victor, now himself; strict regard for interests of Dumby; double; Dumby sweeps the pool; languid 'Bravo, Dumby!' hitch in reckoning with Dumby; pause to consider; head drops forward; not done yet; game to the last; splashes the cards on to the floor, and paces up and down over them pitilessly, as, hearts, clubs, spades, and diamonds, look up at him, deprecating his anger. It is past midnight. He is on the alert now; avoids chairs, tables, sofas, everything that suggests sitting, leaning, lying. It is one o'clock; he is weak and yielding; thinks of tea, but has not the energy to go and make it. It is two o'clock; how heavily and drowsily the great church-clock sounds the hour! This cannot last. Now, then, for his grand effort. He drags himself down stairs, passes through the shop, and into the street, and in the direction of the fields.

He never reached them. He had bravely wrestled with his enemy, but it threw him. His brain and blood were full of dreams that should have been three days old by this time, and they weighed upon him till he sat down on a cold stone by the wayside, when they made brief work of him, and stretched him his full length on the ground. The divine 'Ego' of him went into exile, while the pagan hypothesis roughly held the mortal part to earth! Verdict for the defendant.

It was well for Bobbie that the watchman, who had been for three nights puzzled by his extraordinary proceedings, over and in the little shop, had satisfied himself that all was not right; and being a kind soul, not to say inquisitive, had kept an eye on the

premises, and dogged the little man when he saw him issue haggard as a maniac from his door. His first idea, on coming up to him where he lay, was that he had poisoned himself, and was dead; so he sprang his rattle, and having procured assistance, had Bobbie conveyed to the nearest house, where he was stretched out, apparently lifeless, on a bed vacated for him by the humane landlord, who hurried away for a doctor. The doctor, when he came and inspected him, pronounced him a living man, swore a round oath or two at the watch for their stupidity, and tried to arouse him. This was more than could be done, however. They pulled him, nipped him, poured water on him to no purpose. At last they took him home, put him safely into his own bed, and left him.

It was Friday morning when Bobbie was put to bed. When he awakened, the sun was streaming in upon him, and the church-bells were ringing their last peals, all over the city. Bobbie sat up in bed, bewildered, trying in vain to recall what had happened, when his door opened, and the neighbour-body who, for a consideration, kept things right about him, entered and threw up her hands: 'Thank Heaven, Bobbie, ye've waukened; a' thought ye wis gaen to sleep till doomsday!' The true nature of the catastrophe flashed upon him, and he buried his face, crimson with shame, under the bedclothes.

Bobbie continued in after-times to believe as firmly as ever in the majesty of the will, the supremacy of reason, triumph of mind over matter, and in the diabolical nature of conventions; but it was observed that he always qualified his creed by a saving-clause to the effect that there were some particulars—sleep, for example—in regard to which, from the extreme weakness of the flesh resulting from confirmed habit, the mind was not to be expected to exercise its dominion. He affirmed of this subject to the last, that the thing might be done, under fair conditions: 'Just gie me a bairnie wha hasna been quite spoilt, an' a' warrant a' ll mak it dee wi'oot sleep; that a' wull.' He never had a chance of making the experiment; so he continued in his self-complacency and hatred of conventions, till the grand smasher of all conventions removed him.

#### VISITANTS OF SHIPS AT SEA.

ALL persons who have made long voyages, especially in land-locked seas and on board of sailing-vessels, must remember painfully the wearisomeness of protracted calms. But travellers who have a turn for natural history, often find amusement in circumstances which kill others with ennui. At particular seasons of the year, a ship proceeding, for instance, to the Mediterranean, has no sooner been two or three days out at sea, than the passengers observe birds of various kinds perched upon the rigging. Fatigue is generally supposed to be the cause of these visits, though we cannot always have recourse to this explanation, since even when the shore is near at hand, these little explorers of strange things will come and display their beauty to the mariner, reminding him of green woods and sunny glades, in the midst of vast billows, and the watery waste.

We believe that hawks and falcons are not usually reckoned among migratory birds; yet it is certain that they sometimes cross the Mediterranean where it is broadest, as well from Africa to Europe as from Europe to Africa. One day in summer, lying almost midway between Marmorie and Greece, we observed a golden falcon coming up swiftly from the south, and resting upon the top-gallant-sail-yard. As he remained there a considerable time, we inferred that

he meant to make the passage to Europe in our company; and a young sailor went up to do the honours of the ship, and invite him to descend. Having evidently had enough of flying, the falcon made no objection. He suffered himself to be taken without the least resistance; and when brought down to the deck, looked about him, as we thought, with tokens of pleasure. Perhaps he detected the smell of meat; and certainly when some was offered him, the voracity with which he fell upon it suggested the probability that we were indebted for the pleasure of his company to hunger rather than weariness.

Being treated with much kindness, he shewed no desire to quit us, though allowed his full freedom. He flew fore and aft, soared up to the vane, and then, when he thought proper, came down like an arrow.

Everybody on board was amused with him, and loved to gaze at his large bright piercing eyes as he watched everything around him, or turned up quick glances at the clouds. We began to think him as tame as a kitten, gave him, by way of peace-offering, bits of meat with our fingers, and some of the bolder among us even ventured to stroke his speckled breast. This, however, was not done without some apprehension, for he had sharp claws, and his beak was formidable.

When he had already been with us eight or ten days, we came in sight of Etna, towering ten thousand feet into the blue firmament, and with its deep snowy cap looking like a stationary cloud. The falcon no doubt saw it much sooner than we did; but he had been kindly treated, and was doubtless loath to break hospitable ties. But when liberty or servitude was the question, he could not long hesitate; and, after wheeling twice or thrice about the ship, as if to take an affectionate leave of us, he rose aloft, plunged into space, and disappeared in the direction of the great mountain. We could not blame him, though, as he had grown friendly and familiar, we much regretted his departure.

Some of the old Dutch navigators being, like the rest of their countrymen, possessed strongly by the love of gardening, often used to make the attempt to indulge in the pleasures of horticulture on board ship. They made large, long, and deep boxes, filled them with fine earth, and raised for themselves cresses and other salads during their voyages to the east. When the keen-eyed birds perceived, as they could from a great distance, these little floating patches of verdure, they often alighted on the vessels to examine them. But most of the visits paid to ships by birds are owing to precisely the same motive as makes wayfarers pause at an inn on the road—they have travelled far, and need a little repose.

Unfortunately, sailors have formed a strange theory respecting the appearance of birds in the neighbourhood of their vessels, on their sails, or among the rigging; they look upon them as the sure forerunner of storms. Even the most observant travellers are sometimes betrayed—by putting confidence in old seafaring men, usually full of prejudice and superstition—into sharing this belief. An able naturalist, sailing out of the Baltic, observed, just before losing sight of the island of Gothland, a small gray bird of the sparrow tribe following the ship, upon which the captain said they should certainly have bad weather. Accordingly, in less than half an hour, the wind rose, the sea ran high, and the waves broke fiercely over the bulwarks. The same writer remarks that, in the North Sea, the Baltic, and on the coast of Spain, whenever birds came on board, a tempest was sure to follow, which led him to infer that the petrel is not the only bird whose visits portend storms.

We have not yet sufficiently investigated the laws of instinct to know by what signs birds foresee the



coming on of bad weather, though it is certain they do, long before the human eye can discover in sea or air the slightest indication of its approach. The most interesting point connected with this subject is the light it may serve to throw on the migration of birds. We know that many species disappear from the northern parts of Europe early in the autumn, and that they reappear a little later in Africa and Southern Spain. From these facts we might reasonably conclude, that in the interval they perform the passage from one of these parts of the world to the other. Ships bound in the same direction as the birds are often alighted upon by these little voyagers, when the rough wind precipitates them from the upper regions of the atmosphere, through which they would otherwise prefer to fly. Among these are the redstart, the swallow, and others, which the first harbinger of the nipping cold of winter sends hastily away to the beautiful slopes of Mount Atlas, or the southern acclivities of the Sierra Nevada. Sometimes on the Spanish coast the linnet puts forth to sea, either caught by the vortices of the atmosphere, and carried away against its will, or tempted by curiosity to make acquaintance with the ships that sail down the Atlantic towards the Strait of Gibraltar.

Naturalists have observed that the rock of Gibraltar forms, for the English short-winged summer-birds, a resting-place and rendezvous, where they meet in spring and autumn, on their way to and from the north. In this fact, we discover an explanation of the facility with which these feeble voyagers pass from one quarter of the world to another. If they choose, they may avoid long sea-passages, and flit from hill to hill, and grove to grove, all the way from Kent or Sussex to the extremity of Andalusia. Occasionally, however, for reasons not easy to be discovered, or in obedience to some law of instinct altogether unknown, they not only avoid the land, but set out at night to traverse the sea. When overtaken by hard weather, they are sometimes dashed against light-houses, or the rigging of ships, and in the morning have been found dead on the deck, or among the rocks. It has been conjectured, that, disliking the gloom in which they are enveloped by the storm, they make voluntarily towards the strong beacon-light in search of an asylum; but it is quite as probable that amid the fury of the winds, they lose the power of directing their own flight, and are dashed accidentally against the lofty tower.

The nightingale is undoubtedly to be reckoned among birds of passage; yet we know of no instance of its being taken on shipboard. No doubt, it crosses the Mediterranean from Europe to Africa, because the season in which it is found on the northern slopes of the Atlas is precisely that in which it disappears from our latitudes. So, again, in Persia, the bulbul, or nightingale, is only observed to sing during those months in which its song is never heard with us. To Asia, however, it may easily migrate, along the soft valleys of Roumelia and Asia Minor; but to the Barbary States it could hardly travel otherwise than by sea. It may, indeed, proceed to the specular Rock of Gibraltar, and from thence see its way clearly into Morocco. Most ornithologists are of this opinion, as also that it comes over to us from the continent by the narrowest part of the Channel; and this they imagine to be the reason why it does not stroll so far westward as Devonshire and Cornwall. A much more probable reason is that they do not find their proper food in those countries; because, in reference to distance, Carthage, which they do visit, is much further from Dover even than the Land's End.

Navigators in the Indian Ocean sometimes observe upon the yards and rigging of their ships unknown

birds of the richest plumage, which come to them when they are so far out at sea, that nothing but experience could prove the possibility of a bird's flying to so great a distance. There are two species of cuckoo, natives, it is said, of Hawaii, which are known to fly across the ocean all the way from Australia to New Zealand, a distance of a thousand miles, without once resting, because there is no land between on which they could alight. As swift birds, however, fly at the rate of 150 miles an hour, they can perform this formidable passage in less than five hours and a half.

An eastern mariner once related to us a curious anecdote of a bird-visitor which he had many years before on board his ship. Having left the vicinity of Danger Island, he sailed away almost due east for upwards of a thousand miles, when, early one morning, he observed among the cordage a bird, in shape like a swallow, but of the most exquisite and delicate colours; its breast was bright azure, its tail green, its wings were of scarlet, from its head rose a golden crest, and its eyes were surrounded by a circle of pink feathers. It had been subdued, no doubt, by means of hunger, to a temper of the greatest tameness. He held out to it a little rice upon a plate. The bird descended, perched upon his arm, and ate with extreme voracity. It was evidently much used to man, took fright at no one, but at dinner walked coolly about upon the cabin-table among the plates and dishes, now taking a bit from one hand, and now from another. Happening by chance to approach the cabin-door noiselessly, when, as he thought, the bird supposed itself to be alone, he heard it singing in the most plaintive manner, and at intervals pausing to talk in an unknown language. Watching it more narrowly, he observed that it was standing before a looking-glass, and holding a tender colloquy with its own image. On his entering, it seemed ashamed, and flew to the other side of the cabin.

At length the ship arrived at a small island, where, during its stay, several chiefs came on board, and were invited into the cabin. The mariner was surprised to behold them fall on their knees, bow their heads, and mutter a prayer to this bird. Upon inquiry, the mariner found it was their god, who, having gone out upon the ocean for an airing, had lost his way, and owed his preservation to the fortunate accident of meeting with a ship. The chiefs offered a large sum of money for his ransom; but the generous mariner, respecting their prejudices, or else pitying their weakness, restored them their divinity, without even charging for his board and lodging.

Here in Europe—though the plumage of the birds be less brilliant, which may account, perhaps, for their being held in less respect—ships sometimes present the appearance of a moving aviary. A vessel sailing through the Bay of Biscay, a considerable distance from land, became the resting-place of a goldfinch and chaffinch; snipes also, and a white owl, flew round the ship; and, what was more surprising, a hawk appeared in the midst of large numbers of swallows and martins. To explain this phenomenon, we must suppose that the migratory instinct subdues for a season the instinct of ferocity, otherwise the white owl and the hawk would have feasted forthwith upon their companions. Finding themselves to be fellow-travellers with smaller and more defenceless birds, and looking upon the ship as a wandering caravansary, they respected the rights of hospitality, and for several days lived among their inferiors with equal gentleness and condescension. Another visitant to the same ship was a hen redstart, which entered through the port-holes over the guns, and was daily fed by the sailors. Having reposed as long as was needful, these little wayfarers took their leave—we may presume on their way to Africa, since

the ship seems to have been descending from a higher to a lower latitude, and thus afforded the emigrants a welcome lift. On board the same vessel, a small gallinule and a kestrel hawk were caught at a distance of four hundred and twenty-four miles from land.

It is highly probable that, if our naval officers were in general fonder of natural history, we should obtain from them extremely curious particulars respecting the habits of migratory birds. The oldest of the Greek poets alludes, in many parts of his poems, to the migration of cranes, which are so strong of wing that it may be presumed they never have reason to alight for rest on ships. After having passed the winter amid the warm marshes of the White Nile, or those of the Tigris and Euphrates, they traverse the scented valleys of Syria, and move in spring along the picturesque shores of Asia Minor. A learned traveller has an extremely interesting passage on their migration northward. A company of cranes, returning from their winter-quarters, flew in orderly array over Smyrna, on the 9th of March, northward. Another soon followed, and then many; some by day, when they are seen changing their figure and leader; some by moonlight, when they are heard, high in air, repeating their noisy signals. The same writer, sailing in autumn southward from the Hellespont, again saw his old friends on their way to their winter-quarters. Being near Tenedos, he says he was amused by vast caravans or companies of cranes passing high in the air from Thrace, to winter, as he supposed, in Egypt. He admired the number and variety of their squadrons, their extent, orderly array, and apparently good discipline.

Other migratory birds of strong wing scorn the aid of man in their flight, and dart from one continent to another, depending exclusively on the force of their own pinions. Thus the pelicans, though birds of great weight, ascend into the atmosphere, and forming themselves into one compact wedge, cleave the air like an arrow, and traverse the whole Mediterranean at one flight. They present a sight of rare beauty when preparing for their departure. Differing in this from many other birds, they commence their journey in the morning, collecting in myriads on the marshes of the Nile, and soaring aloft with a scream, they form a vast canopy overhead, while the sun playing on their white feathers, delicately tipped with pink, remind the traveller of the snows of the higher Alps, which are often rendered rosy by the touch of dawn.

These powerful birds, as we have said, need no other resting-places in their migrations than such as have been supplied them by nature. It is otherwise with the smaller winged tribes. These, when caught by the foremost blast of high winds, in their attempt to cross the sea, invariably take refuge in ships. A Swedish naturalist, entering the Mediterranean early in the morning, observed that the *Motacilla Hispanica* (a beautiful species of wagtail) almost immediately came on board. It had become conscious of the approach of a storm, and endeavoured to escape from it by flight. Observing beneath it the white sails of a vessel, while Africa was a long way off, it descended boldly, to make friends, and demand hospitality of the Swedish mariners. They seem, however, to have thought more of the high winds, which the arrival of these little pilgrims portended, than of the beauty or habits of their visitors. The wind which brought these aerial voyagers was a strong north-easter, and it came accompanied by thunder and lightning, things little familiar to Scandinavians in the month of October. But it being the migrating season, the birds would not defer their journey on account of stress of weather; but mounting amid atmospheric and electric

currents, undismayed by the thunder's roar or the lightning's flash, they sought to fulfil faithfully the behests of nature. In the morning, however, the waves were covered with the bodies of larks and wagtails, which had been killed by the fury of the elements during the night. Two only, one of either species, reached the ship in safety.

Sometimes birds seem to be induced by mere curiosity or love of mankind to put out from their native shore, and alight on ships at sea. The sparrow, it is well known, has an inveterate fondness for hopping and chirping about human beings, whether on land or water. They will even cling to the dwellings long after the dwellers therein have passed away, and sit sadly on the eaves at dawn, as if expecting the appearance of some new inhabitant. We are not at all surprised, therefore, to find the African sparrow, on beholding a vessel, flying out to it, in order to take a crumb with its inmates. Sicily abounds with sparrows, which, during winter, sun themselves in large troops upon the beautiful old ruins of Grecian temples, where they will go round with you, as if they were quite interested in the antiquities. As soon as they see a ship, they fly away to it in great multitudes, as if delighted to examine anything new; and on reaching it, flit about the sails, perch upon the yards, masts, and rigging, descending frequently to share the meals of the sailors, in whose rough humanity they place the most complete confidence.

Many species of birds love to construct what Shakespeare calls their procreant cradles on the islands of the Mediterranean. *Ægina* is a favourite spot, where, but for the policy of the inhabitants, they would multiply so fast as to produce a famine. Accordingly, as soon as the breeding-season sets in, the worthy natives disperse themselves over the island, peer into every nook and cranny of the rocks, in search of the nests of doves, pigeons, and partridges, whose eggs they collect and take away, or destroy on the spot without mercy. In this part of Greece, the partridge is reckoned among singing-birds. Its note, they say, is extremely sweet; and, contrary to the instincts of its kind, at least as observed elsewhere, it perches at night. Now and then, the solitary thrush—a peculiar species—alights on the barks that ply among the Cyclades. The Turks set a high value upon this bird, whose song is unrivalled save by that of the nightingale.

It has been suggested by an able naturalist, that a most interesting Fauna might be written on the visitors of ships at sea; and the waters of our own coast would supply considerable materials for such a work. The wheatear, identical with the ortolan or becafico, often rests upon vessels running up along the western coast of England, sometimes remaining on board for twenty-four hours together. This suggests a pleasant idea of sailors, who, instead of killing the little strangers, as many other classes of persons would, are almost invariably kind and hospitable towards them. If they could be induced to apply their leisure hours to the study of natural history, they would be able to furnish the world with innumerable curious particulars respecting the habits of birds. Perhaps the most interesting scene for such observations is the Mediterranean, because of the vernal and autumnal voyages made by all the migratory birds across its waters. About the Lipari Islands alone it would be easy to find materials for an instructive chapter, since many rare birds are often found resting, as if on shipboard, upon their vitrified cones and pinnacles. But when the swallow touches at these isles, it must be for pleasure, not through weariness, since it would be easy for it, with its strong wings, to proceed onward to Sicily. Yet it may often be seen diving, so to speak, through the white smoke of Vulcano, or skimming along the rocky

shores of Felicudi. Having performed these feats to its satisfaction, it plunges away towards the Faro, as if in search of the misty glories of the fata morgana.

### THE MONTH: SCIENCE AND ARTS.

MANY noteworthy things are floating about in the talk of artists and savans: the statue to be erected in honour of George Stephenson at Newcastle-on-Tyne; the Stephenson memorial schools now building at Wellington Quay, where George lived as engineman; the statue of Isaac Barrow set up in the same Trinity College ante-chapel with Newton and Bacon; the monument which is to perpetuate Hugh Miller's name and fame at Cromarty; the statue of Tollens, a celebrated Dutch poet, about to adorn a public place in his native town of Rotterdam; the bestowal of the Sheepshanks collection of engravings on the South Kensington Museum, where the Sheepshanks collection of paintings so worthily supports the donor's reputation. There is talk about the Royal Academy, and what some call their prejudicial monopoly—on which we may remark in passing, that while the R.A.s comprise only forty, the artists, who are numbered by hundreds, cannot all be R.A.s at once; about the safe hanging of the bells, big and little, in the clock-tower at Westminster; about the reopening of the course of lectures to workmen by Professor Huxley, at the School of Mines; and the evening-classes opened for young men at King's College; and about the twenty-one alpaca sheep shipped to Melbourne, that Australia may raise ship-loads of alpaca wool: of the *Great Eastern*, and the hope that now prevails that the huge steamer—of which it was said so long: 'There go the ships, and there is that *Leviathan*'—will be ready for sea by next June; of the steamer built of steel-plates for the navigation of the Kuban by the Russians, who hope thereby to finally circumvent the Circassians; of the improved method of making telegraph cables by plaiting instead of twisting the wire, combining greater strength with more flexibility; of the telegraph which Signor Bonelli proposes to lay from Genoa to Buenos Ayres; of the industrial and agricultural exhibition at Bridgetown, Demerara; of the discovery of gold at Port Curtis, north of Moreton Bay, on the east coast of Australia; of the ship-canal which, by a cut to Lake Ontario, is to connect Lake Huron with the sea; of a certain silky kind of cotton which, as is said, Canada can supply in any quantity; and of the new regulation of the Russian government, which opens the Academy for the instruction of civil engineers at St Petersburg to youths of all classes.

In the last number of their *Journal*, the United Service Institution publish a paper on an important subject—Military Dietetics; another on the rifles and small-arms of England, the United States, and France; and one by Mr Bourne on the Internal Communications of India, in which is forcibly shewn, that to develop the river-navigation with properly built steamers to tug trains of barges, will be more for the immediate good of the country than railways. The length of railway sanctioned in India is 4000 miles, at an estimated cost of L.34,000,000; there are 10,000 miles of rivers that may be opened and navigated at an outlay far below this, while the traffic would be cheap and enormous.—From the Pacific, we hear that King Kahmehameha's minister of the interior has issued an official recommendation that English, which is already the language of the court and commerce, shall become the national language of the Sandwich Islands. After this authoritative announcement, we may expect that the time will not be long before

Anglo-Saxon shall have displaced the fluent and musical Kanaka; and especially as there are a *New Era*, an *Argus*, and a *Monthly Magazine* already published at Honolulu. There seems something very like progress in the publication of the Transactions of the Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society at their fifth annual meeting. Truly we can foresee nothing but good in the spread of the English language; and we think the suggestion a good one that the Roman character should be adopted in printing and writing the native languages of India. It would be as easy to teach this to children as any other; and if generally adopted in the schools, a few years would see a numerous youthful population familiar with the alphabet of the west. If John Chinaman would but exchange for it his present complex and cumbrous symbols, his gain would be great.

Another explorer has started on the track of Barth and Vogel—Baron von Kraft, who will penetrate Soudan from Tripoli, in the guise of a Turkish physician, and on reaching Timbuctoo, should he prove so fortunate, will then strike out new routes to complete the discoveries of his predecessors.

The Zoological Society have had a notice of a talking canary—the second instance of the kind on record. The bird in question was, owing to the neglect of its parents, brought up by hand, and so became more familiar with human speech than ornithological warblings. At the age of three months, it began to talk, saying *kissie! kissie!* and since then it has gone on adding to its vocabulary, and now repeats for hours a succession of phrases comprehending about a dozen words, whistling from time to time a bar of *God Save the Queen*.—The Society of Arts have opened their 105th session with an address from Mr Dilke, wherein what they hope to do is made to appear worthy of what they have done; they gave medals for the employment of steam-power in the cultivation of the soil, for a paper on the progress of the light-house system, and other practical subjects, and on New Zealand and Canada and their resources. —The Meteorological Society of Scotland is now organised, and fairly at work, Professor Piazzzi Smyth, astronomer-royal for Scotland, having consented to give his attention to the arrangement and reduction of the observations that may be sent in.

The Royal Society, at their anniversary meeting, elected Sir Benjamin Brodie as their president, a measure which will probably satisfy those who think that the chair of that ancient corporation should not be filled by a lord. The Fellows should choose the best man, regardless of all other considerations. The retiring president, Lord Wrottesley, drew attention to the scientific questions in which government and the society may be said to co-operate—a co-operation highly beneficial to science—and, as exponent of the sentiments of the meeting, he presented the Copley medal to Sir Charles Lyell, in recognition of his eminent services to the science of geology; a royal medal to Mr Albany Hancock of Newcastle-on-Tyne for studies in natural history and zoology, chiefly as regards the mollusca; a royal medal to Mr Lassell of Liverpool for his astronomical researches; and the Rumford medal to M. Jules Jamin, professor at the Ecole Polytechnique, for investigations and discoveries by which optical science has been greatly enriched. This latter was founded by Count Rumford, to be given every two years for the most important discovery in heat or light, and is worth, with the dividends accruing on the fund, which go with the medal, more than a hundred pounds.

Every week brings to light some new application of that yet novel substance—glycerine. To say nothing of its applications to photography, it serves many purposes in domestic economy and mechanical

operations. It has properties in common with oil, but, unlike oil, will bear mixture with water and alcohol, and does not solidify in a temperature which freezes even mercury. It is useful in pharmacy, harmless as a medicine, and not disagreeable in taste. Some kinds of food which are injured by becoming dry, might be kept moist for months if coated with glycerine, more or less diluted according to circumstances. Confectionary and other things, now protected by tinfoil, might in many instances be better preserved by glycerine; indeed, we hardly see an end to its application in this way. Mustard mixed with glycerine will not dry up rapidly, as housewives know it does when mixed with water. Hitherto, tobacco-manufacturers have used treacle to moisten and sweeten the leaf, and find it at times ferment and turn sour; but with glycerine it may be kept moist and sweet for any length of time—a matter of no small importance to those who indulge in the filthy practice of chewing. Again: gas-meters are liable to get out of order by freezing or evaporation of the water with which they are charged; these inconveniences are obviated by glycerine, diluted until it will absorb no water from the gas on its passage through the meter. For the lubrication of delicate machinery, for watches and chronometers, glycerine will probably be found preferable to oil; it may be used in water-colour painting, and for copying purposes, and in keeping specimens of dried plants in a flexible condition. Moreover, we hear that tincture of iodine and glycerine is a cure for even the most inveterate corns.

An operative chemist at Caen announces that coffee-grounds make an excellent manure, because of the nitrogen and phosphoric acid which he discovers therein. Does he include the chicory which forms so large a proportion of coffee-grounds in France?

Medical and physiological science presents a few noticeable facts. Dr Theophilus Thompson, in a paper communicated to the Royal Society, endeavours to trace the action of cod-liver oil upon consumptive patients, shewing that it largely increases the quantity of the red corpuscles of the blood. Consumption, as is well known, drains away these red corpuscles; thereby depriving the system of much of its vitality; but here we see a means of repairing that loss while taking measures to restore the general health. The fact is a valuable contribution to scientific medicine. Some authorities, however, are of opinion that cod-liver oil is an aliment, and not a medicament, and that its beneficial effects are solely due to nutrition, and not to any special influence which it is supposed to exert on diseases of the chest.

Dr Dickinson of Liverpool has written a paper in which, from personal experience, he recommends the climate of Egypt and Nubia as preferable for invalids to that of any place in Europe or Algiers; care being taken to pass the first part of the winter in Cairo, and then journey up into Nubia for the second part. Rheumatism, diseases of the lungs, indigestion, and other consequences of a sedentary life, there find relief; 'in,' as the doctor observes, 'a brilliant and balmy climate, where mere existence is felt to be a positive luxury, and where the mind enjoys a serenity almost unknown in our foggy land, and the traveller scarcely ever experiences any feeling of ennui, even when confined to his boat.' This is doubtless the truth as regards persons in ill health; but we happen to know a considerable number of persons who find it perfectly possible to preserve a serene disposition even in our foggy land. Health now-a-days is sacrificed to social conventionalities, and the climate gets the blame.

M. Piorry shews that in some cases of defective respiration, enlargement of the heart, and congestion of the liver, a simple and beneficial remedy is to be

found in deep inspirations, filling the lungs full of air several times a day. In a paper published at Paris, he enters at length into the rationale of the question; but we have only space to notice the essential point of his theory, which, at all events, may be adopted without danger.

In the *Proceedings* of the 'Med. Chi.,' as the Medical and Chirurgical Society is familiarly called among the profession, Dr D. F. Rennie of the convict establishment, Western Australia, calls attention to what, in plain English, means the harmful consequences of being careful overmuch about the prisoners in our jails. He found the convicts liable to eruptions and dysentery, when all the rest of the colony was in health, and seeking for the cause, discovered it in the undue quantity of food allowed to each man—27 ounces of bread, and 16 ounces of fresh meat, daily. He remonstrated with the convict authorities, but they would not believe that the food was in excess; he appealed to Governor Fitzgerald, who appointed a committee to examine the question; and they confirmed his views. A reduction was made, which brought down the quantity of food to 1½ lb. a day, and with the best results on the health of the convicts. These men, moreover, as the doctor points out, were of impaired constitution, with imperfect respiration, lungs more or less diseased, occasioned by their sedentary imprisonment in hot cells before transportation. Not only those who had been some time in the colony, but fifty men examined immediately on their arrival, shewed the same impaired respiration. There is something here which, as Dr Rennie thinks, 'strikes at the root of the whole dietetic system pursued during the earlier period of their confinement in England; the state of these convicts with respect to sickness contrasting strongly with that of the inmates of the military prison, who have a simple, wholesome, and yet ample diet, and plenty of exercise in the open air; whereas the convicts, during the first twelve-months of their imprisonment, are shut up like hot-house plants in a warm cell, employed at a sedentary occupation, and placed on a diet double that allowed to the military prisoners.' Apart from its importance as a question of prison-discipline, this subject of excess in food is one deserving of consideration by thousands who are not prisoners.

Dr Pidduck, whose paper on the Osteophosphate of Lime as a dietetic remedy for curvature of the spine, and the long bones of the limbs, we noticed a year ago, now discusses the properties of iodide of calcium, as a valuable addition to the *materia medica*. This substance, a combination of iodine and lime, is an inexpensive and remarkably useful medicine, particularly in cases of chronic metallic poisoning, as with painters, plumbers, brass-founders, and others. 'It is highly probable,' says the doctor, 'that the antidote of every poison is to be found in the several kingdoms of nature whence the poison is derived; as, for example, ammonia is the antidote to animal poisons; potash to vegetable, and soda to mineral poisons; so iodine, chlorine, and bromine may be, and facts lead to the conclusion that they really are, antidotes to the metallic poisons.' The subject, however, is one that requires patient investigation; and much is yet to be learned concerning the symptoms and effects of 'chronic medicinal poisoning of the blood and tissues.'

M. Ozanam has been trying experiments with diluted vapour of prussic acid, shewing that diluted and in moderate doses, it produces a species of anaesthesia. But a very slight increase of strength causes immediate death, and were it not for the microscope, death without any signs of poisoning; with this instrument, however, there is discoverable a rupture of the minute nerve tubules which sufficiently betrays the fatal cause. In cases where the effect is alarming, but short of actual death, the remedy is oxygen;



respiration of oxygen until the last trace of the acid is eliminated.

The subject of Chinese poisons is treated of by Dr Macgowan in an interesting article in an American journal. It is one of which at present but little is known. We find that wholesale destruction of the English troops by an inoculating poison has been a favourite project with the Celestials, and sanctioned by the military authorities; but the opportunity for trying it never came. Another scheme proposed to Commissioner Lin was to inoculate all the Europeans in Canton with leprosy, as a sure means of getting rid of them. It was rejected as too slow in its operation.

The poisons which kill by inhalation are employed in a way which gives us a strange notion of Chinese morality—in *filicide*. Dr Macgowan coins a word to express the fact. It appears that parents do not scruple to put out of the way a grown-up son who is likely to disgrace his family. We quote a case in point by way of conclusion: a government functionary had a son whose misconduct was such that his removal was determined on. 'To effect the object without publicity, no small finesse was requisite on the part of his father and friends. Suspecting their designs, the young man became excessively wary. On the day agreed upon for his execution, the father feigned to be withholding the son's much-loved opium, until he could induce the hapless youth to take a draught of tea, which he was artfully led to suppose was drugged. At length, affecting to be wearied by the son's contumacy, the father gave him his opium-pipe, having mixed with the genial *papaver* another drug intensely poisonous. After a few inhalations, the victim fell into a stupor, followed by convulsions, to which his athletic frame succumbed in less than six hours.'

#### ABOUT THE PANTOMIME.

This is Christmas-day, and Monday night will be boxing-night, when a hundred pantomimes, new or old, will be conjured into existence throughout the country, in celebration of the event—the event of the year to the masters and misses of the juvenile world. A countless host of little boys and girls are on that evening gratified with their annual visit to the theatre, and witness, in a paroxysm of excitement, the manifold delights of the ever-after-well-remembered pantomime of 'Harlequin and the Tyrant King Gobblemupandskrunshemdowno, or the Doomed Princess of the Fairy Hall, with the Forty Blood-red Pillars'—full of the usual tricks and transformations, and, if we may believe the bill, 'resplendent with new scenery, machinery, dresses, and decorations.'

We often wonder if our juvenile friends ever think of the enormous amount of industry which must be evoked before the pantomime can be presented to the audience—before Clown can knock down Piccrust the baker, or before Pantaloon can rob the simple-minded butcher, who has been robbed every Christmas in every pantomime that has been produced in the three kingdoms, from the earliest period of their existence down to the present time. Even grown-up people, we have often thought, have a sort of idea that the Christmas pantomime is a thing produced by accident, or that it is knocked together on the spur of the moment, just because people want a hearty laugh for their children on boxing-night; and also, *sub rosa*, a little cachinnatory exercise for themselves. The pantomime is not, however, got up by accident, but is the result of intense labour, mental and bodily, on the part of all

concerned, managers, authors, scene-painters, designers, carpenters, property-makers, costumiers, spangle and lace makers, and pantomimists—that is to say, clowns, harlequins, pantaloon, columbines, sprites, harlequins, ballet-girls, musicians, and supernumeraries of both sexes. The preparations for the pantomime may be assumed to commence in the large London theatres about the beginning of August, or even earlier, when 'the house-author' and the manager determine what it is to be, and upon the principal ideas for which it is to be made the vehicle. As the autumn progresses into winter, it—having as yet no name, or the name being for a period a profound secret, the pantomime is always, by those interested, spoken of as *it*—gradually gets into shape; scenes are invented, and tricks planned; advertising tradesmen are arranged with, some of whom willingly pay L.50 or L.100 for a scene which advertises their goods—that is, a scene having a view of their premises, wherein clown and pantaloon carry out a deal of practical fun with the articles in which they deal. The house-author, of course, only prepares what is called the introduction, or literary part of the harlequinade, which is usually made a vehicle for fine scenery, gorgeous processions, incidental ballets, panoramas, &c. Some one of the pantomimic corps usually take charge of what, in technical phraseology, is called the 'comic business'; but there are persons in London, such as the far-famed Mr Nelson Lee, who make it their special business, for a 'consideration,' to get up this department of our Christmas entertainments.

In the fulness of time the pantomimic corps are summoned to the theatre—they have most of them been engaged since last season, if they are public favourites—and a time is fixed for the commencement of the necessary rehearsals. A troupe of fifty ballet-girls has been engaged for the processions and tableaux. Beverly, the inimitable scene-painter, has promised to do a couple of his finest scenes of fairy-land. Dykwykin has promised designs for the masks and costume of the fifty guards of the tyrant king Gobblemupandskrunshemdowno; and by and by things are so far advanced, that the name of the piece is no longer kept secret, and the bill—the bill of the pantomime, with all its comicities, is drawn up, and is very privately got into proof for the consideration and criticism of the author and manager; for, be it known, the bill is a most particular item of the pantomime, and has been frequently known to be a great deal funnier than the piece it professes to describe. But, previous to all this, when the author has got the piece into something like shape, the stage-manager assembles those who are to take part in the acting or getting-up of the pantomime in the green-room, and reads what is called in theatrical parlance the 'opening,' in order that the mechanists, tailors, artists, &c., of the theatre may each know what is required of him. For this purpose, the necessary explanations are made, and the chief of each department is provided with a list, or 'plot,' as it is called, of everything which will be required in his line of duty; and after this has been given them, there is no excuse for idleness; so these heads of departments at once set to work, assisted by a swarm of *aides* of all kinds; for the gigantic preparations will require every hour of their time, from the date of that reading till boxing-night, before the productions of these working *genii* can go before the public, with their fairy scenery, their comic masks, their elaborate dresses, and all the spangles and golden glitter which are incidental to the creation of a successful pantomime.

Let us imagine, then, that it is the middle of December—the best time for making the tour of that part of the house, from which so many metaphors

have been drawn, Behind the Scenes. 'Here we are,' then, to use the Christmas language of the clown, having got safely through the hall, and passed—a difficult achievement—the Cerberus of the place, on the P. or prompter's side of the stage, at the first entrance. The curtain is drawn up; and the audience portion of the house is all covered over with calico and looks cold and dismal enough without the happy faces whose smiling approbation will, in good time, light it up. A flexible tube conveys gas to an upright in the orchestra, where sits the leader of the ballet-music looking over and trying his grand overture to the forthcoming Christmas novelty, while a *répétiteur* is busy scraping away at the *Elfin Waltz*, which a lady and gentleman, curiously attired, are practising on the stage. The lady is dressed in an old pair of silk tights, dirty satin shoes, worn-out ballet skirt, a felt bonnet, and a warm cloth polka. 'Is it possible!' exclaim our young friends; 'can that be Columbine? and is that really Harlequin?' 'Yes,' we reply, 'that is the doomed princess, afterwards columbine; and her companion in the white trousers, pea-coat, and buff shoes, is the knight of the spangles—harlequin.\*' These are their working-clothes they have on; but wait till boxing-night, and what couple will be more resplendent! The cadaverous-looking trio in the prompter's corner, who are talking about some alterations of the comic business, consists of clown, pantaloons, and stage-manager. These men lounging on the other side are 'supers'—that is the stage-name for the wretched individuals who, for the sake of eightpence a night, will espouse any side of a dispute, and are perfectly indifferent whether they belong to the Montagues or the Capulets. On the present occasion, they are to act alternately, of course with a change of dress, as the retainers of the tyrant king Gobblemupandskrunshemdowno, and of Prince Razorsbanks, his rival in the affections of the Doomed Princess. That little thick-set quiet man, with the intellectual face, is the painter or artist of the house; and the important-looking personage with whom he is talking, is Mr Joints, the eminent mechanist of the establishment. Mysterious voices are sounding loudly far away up in the 'flies'; while a busy carpenter is industriously opening up a 'slot' at the back-part of the stage, and oiling a part of the work, to make it run well. We look through the long narrow opening, and gaze at the wonderful region—the bowels, so to speak, of the place; what wheels, what ropes, what pulleys, what depths and depths there are, away far down below the floor, there, lighted by dim lights in obscure lanterns, and where men in fustian jackets and paper caps lie in wait for signals from above—tinking bells, or orders through speaking-tubes; while even the stage itself seems a perfect riddle of traps and openings, and a place of danger to the uninitiated. As we come off the boards at the P. or prompt side, passing the green-room, we see the door of the property-room, and although we are warned by a placard that there is 'no admittance except on business,' our young friends may venture in. What a scene! Just imagine a greengrocer's shop, a poulterer's and butcher's stall, a musical-instrument warehouse, an

old-furniture *dépôt*, a china store, a hardwareman's, all compressed into one moderate-sized room, and the reader will then have a faint idea of what a theatrical property-room is. The varied properties are piled away in heaps upon the floor, or on shelves, or are hung around on nails, most of them for use in the pantomime; on the walls, especially, are grinning at us the gigantic false-faces, designed by the aforesaid Dykwyntkin, and which are destined to be so provocative of mirth to the wondering Master Toms and Miss Marys of boxing-night.

We shall next visit the workshop where these things are made. That large mass of yielding clay can be easily moulded into the face of one of the tyrant king's guards. The mass, after the comic or terrific physiognomy has been shaped upon it, is smeared over with oil, so that a thin plaster-of-Paris mould can be taken from it. This, in turn, like a shape for moulding jelly, will be well buttered or greased, and then sheets of thin brown paper will be pasted in till the face acquires the requisite strength; then it is taken from the mould, and dried, preparatory to having masses of coloured wool or horsehair sewed upon it, and the necessary amount of rose-pink bestowed upon the nose and cheeks, till it is fitted to pass as the head of one of Gobblemupandskrunshemdowno's retainers. Large quantities of vegetables are also in progress—the great barrel full of saw-dust is for stuffing into these red cases, which, during the pantomime, do duty as carrots at the terrible 'spill' or uproar which terminates each scene of the comic business. These fine-looking legs of mutton, loaves of bread, and sides of bacon, are all 'got up' in this apartment, and, as the bill says, 'regardless of expense,' as are also the tempting pots of beer with the fierce foam upon them; also those miraculous chairs which change into pianos, and those wonderful beds which, with an utter contempt for the centre of gravity, will, the moment clown lies down, mount to the roof of the bedroom; also those dummy figures of harlequin, policemen, &c., which are shot out of cannon, or are pounded to dust in a gigantic druggist's mortar, or are put once or twice through the clown's mangle, and then, by means of water, are remade up into their natural form. Everything required in the pantomime in the shape of properties can be manufactured here, from the crown of the tyrant usurper to the rod used in the third comic scene—Dr Birch's academy—where the tall boy in the white pinafore, who brings up the rear of the boarding-school procession, comes in for a mock flogging at the hands of a very starved-looking usher.

Next door to this wonderful workshop is the wardrobe, where the theatrical dresses are kept. Those in a large establishment are, of course, very numerous and expensive (the cost of the tartan alone for the dresses in *Rob Roy*, for instance, was L.150). At present all hands are busy on the costumes for the pantomime; the dresses for the guards and the tyrant king are now in hand, made of real catskin, with the original hair on. Alas! how many poor cats will have disappeared from their homes and sympathising proprietors, to make up the requisite number of skins. Those young ladies, yonder, are busy sewing spangles and beads on the skirt of a dress intended for columbine to dance in. That pile of white-satin ballet-shoes has just come from the shoemaker's; they are for the fifty pair of feet of the fifty young ladies of the tyrant's court, who dance and attitudinise that terrible bully to sleep. Observe, they are not squared off at the toes, like the white-satin shoes of society, but are beautifully rounded at the point, as the dancing-shoes of theatrical people invariably are. We will not venture even to guess how many yards of gold-sprigged muslin may be required for the fifty dresses of the aforesaid young damsels, but that enormous

\* Some ignorant people are accustomed to assert that the pantomime corps perpetually bathe themselves in oil, to keep their joints supple; but the great oiler of the joints of pantomimists is exercise, and the perpetual motion of their profession. A pantomimist does not live long, as the herculean exertions which he has to go through soon kill him. It is said of Grimaldi that, even while he was a comparatively young man, his exertions had quite debilitated him. 'Men were obliged to be kept waiting at the side-scenes, who caught him in their arms when he staggered from the stage, and supported him, while others chafed his limbs, which was obliged to be incessantly done until he was called for the next scene, or he could not have appeared again.'

mass on yonder table is supposed to contain the full quantity. The green and red baize which lies about in careless confusion, will speedily be converted into tunics for the opposing pantomimic armies, who are to do battle for the rights and liberties of the Doomed Princess. The wardrobe and tailor's shop at such a period as this are perfect hives of industry, and with every person engaged, the order is 'stitch, stitch, stitch,' from early morn till the chimes ring out the midnight hour. Among the other costumes which are in progress, there is a dress for harlequin, made of beautifully woven stuff, and patched all over with variegated pieces of silk. This style of dressing harlequin is exactly fifty-eight years old, and was first introduced in the pantomime of *Harlequin Amulet*, which was produced in 1800. Before that time, we are told, 'it had been customary to attire the harlequin in a loose jacket and trousers, and it had been considered indispensable that he should be perpetually attitudinising in five positions, and doing nothing else but passing instantaneously from one to the other, and never pausing without being in one of the five.'

The carpenter's shop is as busy a scene as the tailor's. The hammer and the saw are for ever sounding. 'Flats' and 'wings' are always being nailed into shape, and covered over with canvas, ready to go up to the painting-room. At the time of our visit, a being in canvas overalls, wearing a paper cap, and having a neat little saw in his hand, is busy cutting out the shape of some foliage, or, as the operation is called behind the scenes, marking the 'profile.' Carpenters in some theatres perform a great many duties which are not dreamt of in extra-theatrical shops. We knew a man once who had been at some time or other connected with nearly every provincial theatre in Great Britain and Ireland, and who called himself a carpenter; but he could do anything: he could form a scene, stretch on the canvas, and, if it was for a chamber, he could paint it. He also officiated as a scene-shifter, and went on for 'little business' at night. He could make properties, and did not disdain to act the part of tailor or check-taker when required. Once or twice, upon emergency, he took a place in the orchestra; and with an accordion he has sometimes officiated as the whole band of a theatre rural. Yet for all his usefulness, he never had a larger salary than sixteen shillings a week.

We may now leave the carpenter's shop, and visit the studio of the artist, which is situated at the top of the theatre. The painting-shop is exactly over the back-part of the stage; but it is a great way up. It is a long room, and is filled with a profusion of light, by means of a gigantic glass erection on the top of the house. In this chamber we see the artist at work on the back-part of 'the tranquil lake in the empyrean fields of balmy delight.' The canvas is astonishingly large; but it is quite manageable, and can be lowered or raised to any required height or depth by means of slight machinery constructed for the purpose. The dexterity with which it has been painted is quite wonderful. The immense surface having been sized over, an outline of the landscape is traced out pretty boldly by the principal artist; then it is more minutely outlined in ink, and numerous portions of the design, originally dashed off on Bristol-board, in water-colours; all the principal masses of colour are at once washed in by the assistant-brushes, but the finish conferred upon the whole is left to the principal artist, who executes it with a skill and power which will obtain, we trust, the high encomiums of the critics of the Sunday papers, as well as the volleys of applause bestowed upon it by the 'discriminating' audience who are always sure to assemble on boxing-night. The celerity with which business is carried on in this department of the theatre is quite miraculous; although, aided, no doubt, by the largeness of the canvas operated

upon, which admits of a perfect army of brushes being engaged upon it at the same time, all directed, however, by the great master-brush of the establishment. A considerable portion of the labour in the painting-room is quite mechanical: for instance, straight lines for cornices, &c., are traced on the canvas by means of a tightly drawn piece of cord, rubbed over with dry colour, which is placed against the scene, and then pulled out, and let down again, when, of course, it leaves its mark. This and similar work can be done by a labourer or boy. This elaborate scrolled scene for a chamber in the tyrant's palace, is done by means of 'pouncing'—that is, a small portion of the design is pricked out on a sheet of paper, which is held against the canvas, and then a bag of charcoal is dashed upon it, leaving, of course, the outline to be afterwards finished. This process is repeated till the whole of the large surface is covered, and when finally perfected, it looks very well indeed. When scenes are intended to dazzle and glitter, as is usually the case in a pantomime, they are daubed over with Dutch metal, the artist marking the places to be so done with a thinnish kind of glue; and the bits so prepared are either covered with gold or silver leaf, as may be required.

This finishes our tour of the industrial departments of the house; and if we have not adequately described the great labour involved in getting up the pantomime, we can give our readers another mode of judging of it by stating that the cost of getting up a great London Christmas piece in Covent Garden Theatre a few years ago, was nearly eight thousand pounds; while the weekly bill for salaries and necessities to keep it going, was above seven hundred pounds! A London pantomime of any pretensions to magnitude or splendour will be certain to cost a couple of thousands; the competition is so great, that a manager must spend a great deal of money, or he will be outdone by others, and his house will fail in attraction.

But at length Boxing-night—the night of nights to our young friends—arrives, and, having explored the region which lies behind the green curtain, and seen the details of which a pantomime is made up, we are now ready to see it as it appears to the audience. Before the curtain draws up, and during the time when our company are enduring what somebody has graphically called the purgatorial passage to the paradise of pantomimic delights—namely, the eternal *George Barnwell*, or mayhap *The Stranger*, we express a hope that our young companions who are just about to enjoy their annual peep at the Christmas pantomime, are aware of the great antiquity of this their favourite entertainment. We beg they will remember, while laughing at the drolleries of Mr Clown, or while they are indignant at the buffets bestowed upon poor Pantaloon, that pantomime was known to the ancients, and was practised in various forms by the Greeks and Romans—not, however, at all times as an amusement, but was resorted to in their great festivals and solemnities, as on the occasion of marriages and funerals.

Pantomimes were not got up in this country till the year 1702, when we find that one was produced at Drury Lane Theatre, called the *Tavern Bilkers*. It was brought out by one Weaver, a provincial dancing-master, and was well received. In consequence of his success, he brought out several others; such as *The Loves of Mars and Venus*, all of which were successful. It was not, however, till the advent of the Grimaldi family, in 1758, that pantomime began to be important. Mr Grimaldi—a son of the great dancer and the famous clown—brought this kind of entertainment to a state of great perfection, and for many years assisted in the getting-up of those pantomimes of the good old times about which we hear old playgoers

talk so enthusiastically. Grimaldi was thus apostrophised by James Smith, one of the authors of the *Rejected Addresses*:

Faetious mime! thou enemy of gloom;  
Grandson of Momus, blithe and debonnaire,  
Who, aping Pan with an inverted broom,  
Can brush the cobwebs from the brows of care.

But we are forgetting the present in these reminiscences. What a buzz there is when the curtain rises, and the tyrant king's band of Christy minstrels are seen, ay, and heard too, playing a serenade before the great entrance to the palace. This morning, no person could have supposed it possible that the piece could come out at all—but here it is, ay, and a great success into the bargain, as might indeed be expected from what we already know of the preparations that have been gone through to insure its 'going' well. 'Could we not go behind to-night?' asks some one. Heaven forbid! we have more sense than to venture behind the scenes on the first night of a new Christmas piece. We know from experience what kind of treatment we should receive, how we should be knocked about at the various entrances of the stage, or perhaps shoved 'on' in some of the mobs in *propria persona*, without being called by the audience. The bustle and animation behind the scenes during the run of a popular Christmas piece can scarcely be described, and every available inch of space is blocked up with the necessary properties. Here a basketful of mock vegetables; there, a lot of chairs; in another place, a heap of kitchen utensils. 'Now, then, by your leave,' and a fierce giant, carrying his head under his arm, twists you aside—not very ceremoniously. Then the shrill treble of a trembling fairy says: 'Please, sir, will you allow me to pass?' Then the stage-manager asks some one who you are. Next, a carpenter condescends to inform you that it is very warm, and hints at 'beer.' 'Take care of your feet!' shouts the prompter, and looking down, you see two gigantic warming-pans ready to be shoved on for the next scene. As you pass up the narrow path between the side-scene and the wall, in order to gain the door, harlequin and columbine, reeking hot, bound from the stage, and nearly overthrow you; while just as you recover your perpendicular, you receive a blow on the cheek from a soft turnip, and a furious knock on the shins from a wooden cheese.

It is said that the spell of pantomime is broken, and that this kind of entertainment will speedily be numbered among the things of the past. But the same thing was said a quarter of a century ago. Just at that date, a public journalist stated that 'ingenious tricks, startling transformations, surprising feats of agility, grotesque masks, smacks, thumps, and tumbles, astonish without amusing, unless they are made to bear upon the action of the story. Wanting purpose, the wit of the concocters, the cleverness of the machinist, and the humour of the performers, are of no effect: strange, that those most concerned in

the prosperity of pantomime will not see what is so obvious to everybody else!' Notwithstanding these predictions, we still find pantomime in vogue; and since some of the London Christmas pieces run for a period of sixty or seventy consecutive nights, drawing large audiences on each representation, we must conclude that there is yet life in that amusement.

### HOLLY BERRIES.

HOLLY berries, holly berries,  
Red, and bright, and beaming,  
Through the dusky evergreens  
Like sprays of coral gleaming;  
Ye have power to fill the heart  
With memories of glee:  
Oh, what happy thoughts can cling  
Round the holly tree!

When I see the holly berries,  
I can think I hear  
Merry chimes and carols sweet  
Ringing in my ear.  
Christmas, with its blazing fires  
And happy hearths I see:  
Oh, what merry thoughts can cling  
Round the holly tree!

Bring the glowing holly berries;  
Snow is lying deep;  
All the gay and blooming flowers  
Till the spring-time sleep.  
Let them grace our happy homes  
With their crimson light,  
Mingling with the sombre fir,  
And the laurel bright.

Keenly blows the icy wind,  
Shorter grows the day,  
Winter scatters cold and gloom  
In his dreary play.  
Yet we love the closing years  
For the joy they bring,  
And the holy memories  
That round the holly cling.

Holly berries, holly berries,  
Red, and bright, and beaming,  
Through the dusky evergreens  
Like sprays of coral gleaming;  
Ye have power to fill the heart  
With memories of glee:  
Oh, what happy thoughts can cling  
Round the holly tree!

C. M. P.

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